



***Tameside
Community Legal Service
Partnership***
www.tameside-cls.org.uk

**Strategic Plan
April 2005 – March 2008**

March 2005

TAMESIDE COMMUNITY LEGAL SERVICE PARTNERSHIP

CONCORDAT

We the undersigned, are committed to the development of a Community Legal Service which benefits Tameside Citizens.

By working in partnership with each other, and encouraging others to take part in a local network which the partnership listens to and consults with, we aim to ensure that the key elements of the Government's vision for a community legal service are addressed.

The Government's vision for a community legal service is:-

- a network of quality providers
- supported by co-ordinated funding
- delivering services to local communities
- based on a clear picture of local needs

As partners, we agree the Tameside Community Legal Service Partnership should have a number of key aims:-

- to look at people's needs for legal advice across the Borough
- check whether people can access legal advice when they need it
- help ensure they receive quality advice
- co-ordinate funding
- develop training and referral arrangements
- encourage new initiatives which help local people

We will refine and review these aims as the partnership develops.

As partners, we will strive to help shape the future of community legal services in Tameside.

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legal services
COMMISSION



Tameside & Glossop
Law Society



Tameside & Glossop
Primary Care Group



Tameside Association of
Community Organisations



GREATER MANCHESTER
CENTRE FOR VOLUNTARY
ORGANISATION

West Pennine
Health Authority



The Vision

The Government's vision for a community legal service is:-

- * a network of quality providers
- * supported by co-ordinated funding
- * delivering services to local communities
- * based on a clear picture of local needs

The Tameside Community Legal Service Partnership was launched in June 1999 and has developed a structure for delivering its key aims:-

- * to look at people's needs for legal advice across the Borough
- * check whether people can access legal advice when they need it
- * help ensure they receive quality advice
- * co-ordinate funding
- * develop training and referral arrangements
- * encourage new arrangements which help local people

The structure consists of

- ❖ the steering group
 - the executive body which has overall responsibility for delivery of the strategic plan with representatives from Tameside Racial Equality Council, The Tameside Association of Community Organisations, Tameside & Glossop Law Society, Tameside Citizens Advice Bureau and Tameside Council
- ❖ the providers group
 - a forum for the development of a partnership of information and advice providers, for the development of new initiatives and for the consideration of common issues e.g. the effectiveness of signposting and referral arrangements
- ❖ the funders group
 - where the funders of advice services, Tameside Council and the Legal Services Commission, will agree a joint strategy for investment in information and advice services.
- ❖ the network
 - of individuals interested in the development of the Community Legal Service who are kept informed of partnership events and progress.

The Review

The Partnership has reviewed the strategic plan for 2002 –2005 and recorded these key successes:

- Consolidation of the county court duty advice scheme
- Establishment of a Tameside based employment advices casework resource
- Maintenance of Quality Mark status for all statutory funded advice services
- Successful bid to the Partnership innovation Budget fund for a 2 year project to promote benefit take-up
- Successful bid to the Partnership innovation Budget fund for a 3 year project to establish a mental health money advice service

Assessment of Need and Supply by Level of Service

Information Points...

enable users to find the most appropriate place to turn for further advice. To display a Community Legal Service logo, an Information Point must offer access to the Community Legal Service Directory and/or access to the Community Legal Service Website “CLSdirect”. Some Information Points will simply consist of reference material, with no one available to answer questions, at others someone will be available to help the user find the information needed.

General Help Points...

are where key elements of a clients problem can be identified and advice provided on action that needs to be taken.

Some organisations will provide **casework**. Casework is where the organisation will take responsibility for ongoingaction on a client’s behalf to put their case to someone else, in order to persuade them to make or change a decision.

Provider	Level	Progress
Tameside CAB	General Help	Achieved
TMBC Customer Services	General Help	Achieved
Tameside Carer’s Centre	General Help	Achieved
Tameside Racial Equality Council	General Help with casework	Achieved
Age Concern	General Help	Achieved
DIAL	General Help	Achieved

Specialist Help Organisations...

offer advice and legal help on complex matters in specific areas of law. These organisations may carry out the full range of legal services including representation in court. Specialist help organisations will have particular expertise in certain areas of law.

All solicitors and not for profit agencies with Legal Services Commission contracts have the Specialist Level Quality Mark. Details of the specialist level services provided in Tameside can be found in the provider directory or on the partnership website at www.tameside-cls.org.uk In addition Tameside Council's Welfare Rights Service has the specialist level quality mark for welfare benefits casework.

Review of Current Strategy

For each category of law, progress has been reviewed against the partnership's Strategic Plan for 2002/05.

Recommendation/Action	Review
<i>Matrimonial & Family</i>	
Review existing outreach pilot	Outreach service not maintained due to lack of take-up
Analyse emergency access and consider viability of an out of hours service	Tameside Women's Project providing link to advisers
Review languages spoken and gender of suppliers	No issues reported
<i>Consumer & General Contract</i>	
Support the development of Tameside Consumer Support Network	CSN received funding in April 2004 so new information product being developed
Maintain and market existing advice and information provision	CSN taking on this role
Improve access to consumer advice	CSN taking on this role
Provide consumer education to target groups	CSN taking on this role
<i>Welfare Benefits</i>	
Support Tameside's Social Exclusion Plan by increasing benefit take up amongst pensioners	Achieved Tameside has exceeded its Local Public Service Agreement to raise take-up of the Minimum Income Guarantee to 85%. [MIG was replaced by the Guarantee element of Pension Credit in October 2003. Take up levels are presently at 91.9%.
Implement over 80s take up service funded by the Partnership Innovation Budget	Achieved. Project extended to people aged over 60. Service now consolidated within the Tameside Pension Service joint team.
Complete analysis of capacity for form filling and appeal representation	Completed. Specific form filling capacity now purchased from Tameside customer services.
Assess the feasibility of providing an inter-agency telephone advice line and electronic appointment service	No progress on this item
Build form filling capacity by developing training and second tier support for General Help organisations	Tameside Welfare Rights Service providing regular training input.

Measure the relationship between successful applications and assistance with form filling	Increasing benefit take-up levels suggest that strategy is proving successful.
Develop and implement community education initiatives to promote take up of disability benefits	Further discussion needed at provider group.
Promote use of primary care outlets for outreach provision	Macmillan Welfare Rights Officer established with support from Tameside and Glossop Primary Care Trust and the New Opportunities Fund.
Debt	
Support Tameside's Social Exclusion Plan by increasing access to debt advice	CAB debt advice provision now well established
Assessment of need and review of progress is to be informed by TMBC Policy Unit's research	Quality of life report now contains useful indicators regarding county court activity and Council Tax arrears.
Review existing outreach at Tameside County Court and the Housing Aid Centre	County Court scheme now well established.
Monitor impact of early advice strategy on County Court Judgments and Council Tax summonses	Quality of life report now contains useful indicators regarding county court activity and Council Tax arrears
Implement outreach in Hyde and Hattersley	CAB providing service
Provide debt advice at Magistrates Court for fines defaulters	CAB providing service
Increase capacity of Credit Unions to provide debt advice	MINT initiative will assist here
Review progress of LSC telephone advice pilot	
Review use of self help packs	Agreed that packs have limited application
Implement Mental Health and Debt partnership to provide early advice services, funded by the Partnership Innovation Budget	Project now reaching end of PIB funding phase. Following positive evaluation it is now a priority for the partnership to secure continuation funding for this project.
Monitor impact of Mental Health and Debt partnership	Project now reaching end of PIB funding phase. Following positive evaluation it is now a priority for the partnership to secure continuation funding for this project.
Devise exit strategy for Mental Health and Debt partnership	Project now reaching end of PIB funding phase. Following positive evaluation it is now a priority for the partnership to secure continuation funding for this project.

Housing	
Submit tender for Legal Services Commission Court Duty Possession Pilot	Tender successful
Review existing outreach at court and Housing Aid Centre	Court scheme well established Housing Options Centre session under review
Develop links to local Housing Partnership	Housing strategy group have provided a positive review of the county court duty scheme.
Explore training needs of local landlords	Housing standards group (TMBC) taking the lead on this. Training day held in November 2004
Establish landlord accreditation scheme	Housing standards group (TMBC) taking the lead on this.
Review take up of regional service by Tameside residents	Outstanding
Evaluate impact of early advice strategy focusing on possession hearings and evictions	Positive feedback from landlords and court. Positive evaluation from
Promote the results of this evaluation, particularly among housing associations	Outstanding
Promote mediation services	Outstanding
Education	
Review information currently provided by TMBC	Outstanding
Review take up of regional LSC contracts by Tameside residents	Outstanding
Community Care	
Market local LSC solicitor service	Service not established
Review information currently provided by TMBC	Outstanding
Review take up of regional LSC contracts by Tameside residents	Outstanding
Actions Against the Police	
Review take up of regional LSC contracts by Tameside residents	Outstanding
Employment	
Appoint a joint funded Employment caseworker	Achieved

Promote available services, including Greater Manchester Low Pay Unit's telephone service	Arcades shopping centre promotion took place in October 2004
Co-ordinate existing employment services to increase access	Achieved
Review progress of national LSC telephone advice pilot	Outstanding
<i>Immigration and Asylum</i>	
Monitor the impact of dispersal	Outstanding
Establish mechanisms to review demand and supply	New contracts awarded
Review Tameside usage figures with regional suppliers	Achieved
Work with Asylum Support Team to ensure services are accessible.	Further work required
Promote the availability of Immigration advice in Tameside	GMIAU sessions established at Customer Service offices. Parker Bird/ Beever's/ Rogerson Galvin rota established at CAB.
Develop a closer relationship between TMBC Customer Services and Immigration advice providers	GMIAU sessions established at Customer Service offices
<i>Mental Health</i>	
Inform detaining authorities of quality assured organisations	Achieved
Develop links between specialist providers and advocacy services, to include cross training and referral arrangements	Outstanding
Implement Mental Health and Debt Advice partnership	Project now reaching end of PIB funding phase. Following positive evaluation it is now a priority for the partnership to secure continuation funding for this project.
Identify appropriate outputs for monitoring purposes	Project now reaching end of PIB funding phase. Following positive evaluation it is now a priority for the partnership to secure continuation funding for this project.
Develop exit strategy	Project now reaching end of PIB funding phase. Following positive evaluation it is now a priority for the partnership to secure continuation funding for this project.

Access	
Develop a single telephone contact number for advice services in Tameside	Outstanding
Develop electronic referral system	Outstanding
Identify potential outreach locations in Broadbottom, Hattersley, Mottram, Hollingworth and Haughton Green	“In touch Tameside” service available in libraries in these locations
Develop Information and Help Points within ethnic minority communities	Outstanding
Market the Community Legal Service within ethnic minority communities reviewing accessibility of current material	Outstanding
Develop outreach services and Information Points in health settings, including surgeries, health clinics and hospitals	All health centres are quality marked information points.
Develop all community centres to the relevant Quality Mark Standard.	Outstanding
Increase use of TMBC Customer Service Centres by CLS providers	GMIAU initiative
Review content regarding facilities for disabled people in the local directory	Now available online
Assess feasibility of a one stop shop for disabled people	Outstanding
Provide mental health awareness training	Achieved
Work with local schools, Connexions and the Information Shop to increase access to information and advice for young people	Outstanding
Work with Basic Skills Agency to increase access for people with literacy problems	MINT and Tameside Adult Education Unit now both promoting financial literacy.
Develop consistent method of producing annual client profile	Outstanding
Communication	
Consult residents annually, using the Citizen 2000 results as a benchmark	3 year cycle established
Publish Partnership Annual Report	Achieved 2 out of 3 years
Continue to develop subject based leaflets including domestic violence and divorce	New versions under development

Target supermarkets and Post Offices as information providers	Outstanding
Take a CLS roadshow to each District Assembly	Achieved
Establish the CLS with social work and health service tutors	Outstanding
Include CLS material in Hospital Discharge Packs	Outstanding
Liaise with Benefits Agency regarding recommended advice providers	Pension Service link established
Raise awareness of the Community Legal Service through the Local Strategic Partnership	Achieved
Ensure effective co-ordination with other initiatives through participation in the Local Strategic Partnership	Achieved

Strategic Plan 2005/2008

The Tameside Community Legal Service Partnership is committed to supporting the objectives of the Tameside Strategic Partnership with an assessment of what we can do to support progress against the twenty-five key measures of the Tameside Community Strategy. These key measures cover six policy areas identified by the public as being priorities for Tameside:

- Supportive Communities
- A Safe Environment
- A Prosperous Society
- A Learning Community
- A Healthy Population
- An Attractive Borough

SUPPORTIVE COMMUNITIES

'We want a cohesive community, where there are strong and positive relationships between people from all backgrounds and cultures, in the workplace, schools and neighbourhoods, and where all people have similar life opportunities'
(Community Strategy 2003/2006)

Key Measures:

Reduce variations between areas and communities in educational attainment, health, employment and crime.

Increase the percentage of people in Tameside who feel that residents get on well together regardless of ethnicity.

Ensure that all social housing reaches a decent standard by 2010.

Actions the Tameside Community Legal Service Partnership can contribute to support these objectives:	
<i>Action</i>	<i>Responsibility</i>
Ensure maximum take-up of Tax Credits to ensure all sections of the community benefit in government investment in tackling child poverty.	Provider group/ Welfare Benefit advice providers/ General Help providers
Ensure staff and parents at the nine planned Children's Centres have access to information and advice on benefit and debt issues.	Provider group/ Welfare Benefit advice providers/ Debt advice providers/ General Help providers
Ensure health professionals have access to information and training about benefit entitlement of patients, and know where to refer for further support.	Provider group/ Welfare Benefit advice providers/ General Help providers
Ensure easy access to in-work benefit checks	Provider group/ Welfare Benefit advice providers/ General Help providers
Ensure health professionals have access to information and training about debt management for patients, and know where to refer for further support.	Provider group/ Debt advice providers
Promote availability of employment law advice so as to maintain job security and tackle discrimination	Provider group/ Employment law advice providers
Promote availability of advice in immigration law from quality marked suppliers	Provider group/ Immigration law advice providers/ General Help providers
Promote availability of discrimination advice	Provider group/ Discrimination law advice providers/ General Help providers

A SAFE ENVIRONMENT

'We want a community where people feel safe and secure, but we know that many people are concerned about crime. Working to reduce crime levels and make the streets safer for everyone is one of your top priorities. We will continue to target persistent offenders, improve safety in town centres, reduce burglary and tackle anti-social behaviour as part of our commitment to reduce the level of crime and fear of crime in Tameside'.

Key Measures:

Reduce overall crime.

Increase detection rates.

Increase the percentage of people who feel safe in public places.

Reduce anti-social behaviour.

Halve the number of people who are killed or seriously injured on Tameside's roads by 2007/8.

Actions the Tameside Community Legal Service Partnership can contribute to support these objectives:	
<i>Action</i>	<i>Responsibility</i>
Support diversion schemes targeted at drug and alcohol users, by provision of benefit and debt advice	Provider group/ Welfare Benefit advice providers
Support the mediation scheme between young people and their families to prevent homelessness	Provider Group / Housing advice providers

A PROSPEROUS SOCIETY

'We want everyone in Tameside to benefit from the prosperity of the local economy, with strong, sustainable businesses within Tameside providing well-paid jobs to local residents. This means providing people with the skills they need to get jobs, together with excellent transport links and good quality housing'.

Key Measures:

Reduce the unemployment rate amongst 16-24 year olds.

Increase the proportion of 16 year olds who remain in full time education or work based learning.

Increase the level of income in Tameside households (including pensioners) and wage levels of local jobs.

Reduce the proportion of unfit or vacant private sector housing.

Increase choice in private sector housing.

Actions the Tameside Community Legal Service Partnership can contribute to support these objectives:	
<i>Action</i>	<i>Responsibility</i>
Support the achievement of the Local Public Service Agreement target for increasing the take-up of Pension Credit ¹	Provider group/ Welfare Benefit advice providers/ General Help providers
Support the achievement of the Local Public Service Agreement target for increasing the take-up of Council Tax Benefit amongst older people	Provider group/ Welfare Benefit advice providers/ General Help providers
Support the achievement of the Local Public Service Agreement target for increasing the take-up of Attendance Allowance amongst older people	Provider group/ Welfare Benefit advice providers/ General Help providers
Support the development of the Tameside MINT (Money Information Network Tameside) website to provide information about financial exclusion, debt advice and money management skills.	Provider group/ Welfare Benefit advice providers/ Debt Advice providers/General Help providers
Ensure maximum take-up of Tax Credits to ensure all sections of the community benefit in government investment in tackling child poverty.	Provider group/ Welfare Benefit advice providers/ General Help providers

A LEARNING COMMUNITY

'We want to raise educational achievements and expectations so our young people have a good start in life, and ensure that everyone in Tameside has the opportunity to continue learning and training'.

Key Measures:

Reduce the proportion of adults who have poor literacy, numeracy and ICT skills.

Reach and exceed the national average in relation to percentage of:

- 11 year olds who have good literacy and numeracy skills (key stage 2, level 4 in English and Maths)
- Young people who achieve 5 GCSE's at A* - C.

Increase levels of vocational skills and qualifications.

Actions the Tameside Community Legal Service Partnership can contribute to support these objectives:	
<i>Action</i>	<i>Responsibility</i>
Provide information about the work of the CLS partnership on its website, so as to encourage development of ICT skills amongst users	Steering Group
Support the development of the Tameside MINT (Money Information Network Tameside) website to provide information about financial exclusion, debt advice and money management skills.	Provider group/ Welfare Benefit advice providers/ Debt Advice providers/General Help providers
Support the development of the Consumer Support Network, and its information and consumer education strategy	Provider group/ Consumer Advice providers/ General Help providers
Support opportunities for volunteering in relevant agencies as aid to skills and knowledge development amongst economically inactive, so as to improve employability.	Provider Group

A HEALTHY POPULATION

'We want to make Tameside a healthier place for everyone, with accessible doctors and hospitals, easy access to information, and support for vulnerable people'.

Key Measures:

Reduce GP waiting times to ensure that everyone can get an appointment within 48 hours by 2004

Reduce hospital waiting times so no one is waiting for more than six months by 2005

Reduce the death rate in Tameside

Increase the number of older people helped to live at home

Reduce the number of pregnancies to girls under 18 years old

Actions the Tameside Community Legal Service Partnership can contribute to support these objectives:	
<i>Action</i>	<i>Responsibility</i>
Promote the take-up of benefits amongst people with mental health issues (to exploit link between income increase and vitality scores)	Provider group/ Welfare Benefit advice providers
Promote the development of debt advice and money management skills amongst people with mental health issues	Provider group/ Debt Advice providers
Help older people live at home by promoting the take-up of Pension Credit, Council Tax Benefit and Attendance Allowance	Provider group/ Welfare Benefit advice providers/ General Help providers
Support actions to prevent homelessness by provision of early advice in cases of rent or mortgage arrears	Provider group/ Welfare Benefit advice providers/ Debt Advice providers/ Housing Advice providers/ General Help providers
Support actions to prevent homelessness by provision of county court duty advice scheme	Provider group/ Housing Advice providers/ General Help providers
Investigate possibility of using proposed new Primary Care Centres as locations for advice provision	Steering Group/ Funders Group

AN ATTRACTIVE BOROUGH

'We want Tameside to be an attractive and environmentally friendly place to live, work and visit. We are committed to working with local communities to protect and improve our surroundings to make Tameside a cleaner, greener, more accessible place for current and future generations'.

Key Measures:

Build at least 75% of new homes on previously developed land.

Increase bus use.

Improve the cleanliness of land.

Increase the proportion of household waste which is recycled.

Actions the Tameside Community Legal Service Partnership can contribute to support these objectives:	
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<i>Action</i>	<i>Responsibility</i>
Renovate or relocate Tameside Citizens Advice Bureau	Funders Group/ Tameside CAB